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"bad wind" unless the death occurred in her own home. The effect of a "bad wind" the woman has encountered can also be felt by her baby or transmitted through the milk to her baby, and then it will make him sick.

One or two days after a wedding the bride, by this time perhaps no longer a virgin, returns on a belief ceremonial visit to her parents' home. As she enters the village the woman accompanying her calls out for people to keep infants and nursing mothers out of sight. The bride can set eyes on unweaned infants, but their parents must make sure that neither the children themselves nor their mothers see the girl, lest their milk dry up by reason of the "bad wind" associated with the girl's recent sexual activity. Were a nursing mother to see the bride she would probably curse her, and this could cause infertility in the latter.

More generally it is felt that the most dangerous "bad wind" would be one associated with a person who came to look at the baby just after having had intercourse. Such a person should first take a bath, then put on some clean clothes and wait at least half-an-hour. In the same way if an apparently pure man comes to visit a baby and he has travelled more than a mile he will bring a "bad wind" with him. He should therefore wait in the yard or on the veranda for a short time before entering the house. In this situation the mother would even wait the appropriate amount of time before bowing to his hand if the visitor were her own father. If a nursing mother is obliged to be near a corpse, she also will take a bath and change afterwards before going near her baby. Should an unweaned baby die all other nursing mothers in the village and neighbouring hamlets are expected to visit the bereaved house before the next sunset. They ask the unfortunate mother how she is feeling. Badagas believe that if any nursing mother who was inregular contact with this woman failed to observe this common courtesy, her own infant would soon become ill. And if such a woman nonetheless does fail to visit she must not set eyes on the bereaved mother again until after the next new or the next full moon. This is said to be because the latter might become envious on seeing the other mother nursing, and her sorrow would somehow affect that woman. The nursing mother who failed in this customary courtesy would be afraid that her breasts would dry up, should she meet the bereaved woman shortly after burial of the dead child.

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Principles of Child Care

5.7. Underlying the practice of caring for children are certain core values about the human body which Badaga encapsulate in a few proverbs and can sometimes be persuaded to talk about. What some of these proverbs point to is a need to accept human diversity, and even deformity. One asks rhetorically, "Will all begotten children be real children?" And another proverb makes the same comment in reference to dissimilarities between siblings: "The stomach that has given birth to various people is one; those people are of different sense and different complexion." Similarly, "Are there five even fingers ?" Deformities in children are not of course welcomed—"It is bad if you have a lame child; it is bad if you see a blind man"—yet the individual should not feel embarrassed about a defect: "After the boils have formed, what if you feel shy and repugnant about them ?" Chronic illness also has to be tolerated in relatives and treated: "Even if she coughs she is our woman; even if she looks thin she is a grander woman."

Several proverbs reflect a concern with that hardy anthropological question, the relative strength and influence of nurture and of nature in the individual's personality: "Even if one has forgotten one's own begotten children, one won't forget learnt [bad] habits;" the latter are more important than inborn senses. Indeed, some people would go blind rather than give up a bad habit: "Even if your eyes become black a learnt [bad] habit won't disappear." In direct contrast, though, "Inborn habits won't go away even if you burn a man." Badagas believe that inborn habits (*huttu buddi*) are permanent, whereas learnt ones (*katta buddi*) are not.

A number of proverbs relate to the family relationships that involve children, and the way youngesters should be brought up. A certain firmness is counseled: "Children should be brought up under control, and a disobedient wife should have been sent back home." Similarly, "It is said, if the children are to be good, the mother should be good enough [herself]". Badagas believe that children acquire their qualities from the mother. Even so, "That woman will not know the nature of the girl she gave birth to." Kindness and forgiveness are valued in dealing with children. Thus, "If we caress the head of an orphan boy, our own children will grow up of their own accord" (Metz 1864: 94); "Will a child die from the stripes of a mother ?" (Metz 1864: 97); "Cats and

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854 [603] repeatedly saw K. Sithamma at the age of 75 suckling a small grandchild to quieten it.)

5.13. The arrival of a new baby necessarily brings changes in the 854 sleeping habits of a couple. When it is dusk the door of the house 513 must be closed tight, for fear that a "bad wind" or evil spirit might 342 enter and make the baby sick. This is compulsory until the fifth or [753] sixth month of life: the door may not be opened again, even momentarily, until just before sunrise. If the father has not yet come home at dusk, then either the baby will go to a neighbouring house for the night or the father will have to sleep in one of them when he returns. In later infancy the door should be closed for the night at about 10 o'clock, and this practice will continue until the child is weaned.

854 513 855 [853] When sleeping with her baby a woman's body is entirely nude, for if she wore clothes they would prevent heat from reaching the child from her body. Until a baby is six or seven months old the mother is advised to sleep with her back to it, and never to sleep while suckling: these precautions result from the fear the child may be suffocated by a breast. Thus if the mother wants to roll over on the bed she must first move the baby over. Usually the youngest one or two children sleep between their parents for warmth, with the unweaned infant always next to the mother. Alternatively mother and baby may use one bed, the father and older children occupying another bed. Sleeping with one's children is not altogether a comfortable situation: "The man who is sleeping with children and the man who is eating raw animal flesh are alike"—both experience difficulties. Other older children in the family may sleep together, but after reaching seven or eight girls sleep separately from their brothers, or else with their mother.

833 834 5.14. If a mother has intercourse right after giving birth this weakens the womb for the next delivery, Badagas believe, and so they generally do not do it until five or six months afterwards. One man told me he had enjoyed his wife about three weeks after two of his children were born, and the children died after 52 and 54 days, presumably because of the weakening of their mother's milk. Because of such dangers men used to ask a new father in earlier days, "Are you wearing your loincloth at night?" The cloth was considered sufficient restraint on his passion.

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improve the hair, two other procedures can be followed. Either the hair is washed, using the bark of *toreko:lu* for soap; or else some tiny buds of common bracken are ground up till they form an oily paste. This is used as a shampoo for some days when washing the baby's head.

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A disease that occurs among youngsters causes patchy baldness, as clumps of hair fall out. It is said that "insects" are eating at it and so they must be killed. A biece of hard, hairy bezoar stone, called "hair-diamond," is bought in a bazaar. It is dipped in milk and then rubbed onto the bald patch repeatedly until it bleeds. Then "the insects inside die," I was told.

ORTHODONTICS 856

5.27. "It is bad if a tooth sticks out; it is bad if a river passes beyond the river bank." Thus if a child's tooth is not growing in the right direction an older woman of the household soon tries to bend it into position. She works at this every morning after the child wakes up, and before he eats, for one or two weeks. There are two procedures: either the child sits by the fire and the tooth is held in a cloth that has been heated over the fire; or else the cloth is dipped in very cold water before use. *Ma:dua*, a mouth disease common among children, is described later (6.39).

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TONSILITIS (*tonde kaṭalu*) 752 826

5.28. In earlier days some therapists grew the nails of the left thumb and index finger for use in tonsilectomy. Tonsils were taken out after they ached or swelled so much that the child could not eat. Someone pressed the back of the tongue down with a cooking skillet, so that the child could not close his mouth, while others held his head and arms to keep him still. The therapist put her thumb and index finger down the throat and pinched the tonsils off with her long sharpened nails. (They could be thrown away anywhere.) A pancake made of fresh finger millet was then prepared and kept aside until it was cool and dry. Then it was cut into small pieces and these were

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visit the child's home instead. The man bathes himself, puts on clean clothes, and then sits facing the child, the therapist being on the west side and the child to his east. If the child is restive some old lady holds it. That morning before sunrise, and before any water has been brought to the house, a woman, who must be in a pure state, brings a full pot of water there: it must be from a spring. On the way back with it the woman puts three, five, seven, nine or 11 dead-nettle flowers and three pieces of Bermuda grass into the water. The therapist now picks out the grass and stirs it around in the water while he says the spells. Then he splashes the water from the grass into the child's face, and the child is of course startled. This is done three times, and after the third splashing the child must immediately be moved away to some other spot. He is then made to drink a little of the water from the pot; and the flowers are taken out of it and placed on the child's head. The pot is then carried away and the water poured out in a place where no one will walk.

This is the usual treatment for children aged three to ten. As unweaned infants cannot easily drink the water another procedure is followed with them. The mother brings her baby to the therapist early in the morning. He unties one end of his turban while the rest of it stays on his head, and flicks this end into the child's face as he says the spells. As an alternative to using the turban a twig with three or four leaves on it can be waved in the baby's face as the therapist says the spells.

It is believed that evil spirits may enter a child's body while he is startled or frightened. A therapist can drive such a spirit out by startling the child again. It is probably for this reason that the procedures just described (5.40, 5.41) are followed through (they do not however work with adults). The therapist, usually a man, also says a spell

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this purpose the fresh dung of a young cow which has never calved is preferred: Badagas can tell at a glance if it is the right kind of animal because it should digest its food well. Every four hours the therapist removes the thread, lets the pus flow, and when this stops puts the thread back in the hole. Several times a day, when the cowdung becomes too dry, a fresh coating of it is applied. The swelling should cure in two or three days by this method.

MELANOMA (*bippiri*)

6.3. If when the medicine is first applied the swelling is too big to be called a *ne:ga:le*, but it does not have a head on it, then it is a case of *bippiri*. This can in fact get started alongside a *ga : le*, if all the pus is not removed from the latter. The *bippiri* has to be treated with the bark of a tree (details unavailable).

GOITRE (*kaṇḍa ma:le*)

A goitre is punctured with red-hot needles; or else treated with thorn-apple. Other big swellings are usually cut off, especially if they fail to respond to the above-mentioned medicines. During the present century such surgery has been done with a razor, but before that a piece of broken bottle glass was used.

DEPIGMENTATION OF SKIN, OR VITILIGO (*sullu*)

6.4. Patches of white skin on the body are called *sullu*. This is a disease for which there is no medicine. It is caused by the bite of the blindworm (*Typhlops braminus*), even when the patient is unaware he has been bitten.

taddu)

6.5. Another disease which causes dry light coloured patches on the facial skin is *taddu*. Before going to sleep patients put oil on these patches. There is also another treatment: a relative takes a piece of dry cowdung, and rubs or touches it against the patches, while saying a special formula. The important thing is for the relative to be of the opposite sex to the patient, mature but unmarried, and in the relationship of a classificatory spouse—someone the patient might later want to marry (Badagas are polygynous). As this person touches

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bud and leaves in her mouth for a minute of two, and while keeping them there blows through her clenched fist into the patient's ear (as in 6.35), on the same side of the head as the afflicted eye; but she does not blow on the eye itself. This is done three times, and after each blow the therapist asks, "Is it gone?" In serious cases the white mark does not clear up in one day: then this treatment is given for three consecutive days, early in the morning before the patient takes any food or drink.

ACUTE CONJUNCTIVITIS (*kaṇṇu noi*)

6.37 Yet another eye disease is called "eye goddess," and since it is considered the work of a goddess Badagas behave as they do when the smallpox goddess comes. Unlike the above-mentioned eye diseases, this one is contagious. The eyes become red, they weep, ache, and swell up. When the patient awakens he cannot open his eyes because a white pus sticks the lids together. If he tears them open the eyes will itch and be more troublesome still. Many people, I am told, have blinded themselves by attempting to open the lids.

The eyes should be washed very gently in the morning with the soft leaf of velvety patchouli or related species (*koḍaṅgu*) and some cold water: this will open them. A medicine is administered on three different days, chosen from the following: the third, fifth, seventh, ninth or eleventh days from the start of the illness. The therapist puts into some fresh water a number of white dead-nettle flowers, as many in fact as the number of days since the illness began. He then splashes the water and flowers with his fingers onto the brow of the patient; splashing it as many times as the number of dayss ince the illness began. Following the third occasion on which he does this, he must add leaves of the nim tree to the remaining water. This water must be at body-temperature, and is used to wash the patient's entire body. Should the water be too hot the therapist must simply wait till it has cooled enough, and may not add cold water to it. After this bath the patient does

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not dry himself, but instead sits covered with a cotton cloth under which some incense is burnt to create a thick smoke. After this a cure can be expected. During the entire course of the illness the patient must eat only the "cooling" foods such as milk and fruits, and must abstain from things like chili. Also he should use no woollen material for clothing or bedding.

Mouth, Nose and Throat

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6.38. Teeth are not filed in any way nor are cavities filled. If a tooth is loose, it is pulled out with the fingers, or else an attempt is made to cure it by rubbing it with ginger. There is a proverb which warns, "The son who is spurning his father is no good; the tooth that is protruding from the lips is no good." As we have seen (5.27), a woman will try to bend a child's misshapen tooth into position with a cloth.

PYORRHOEA (*ma:dua*) 164
(753)

6.39. The major mouth disease is quickly detected because a very strong odour is noticeable even from some feet away. Although mainly a children's disease, it can affect adults. Badagas believe that "germs" eat the teeth: the disease can rot them, and a sufferer cannot put anything in his mouth because it is so painful. The mouth therefore has to be made insensitive so that he can eat. A local anaesthetic is therefore made from galls found on oak, obtained from a tree in the plains: they are over 2 cms in diameter and are ground up with woman's milk or cow's milk to form a paste, which is then rubbed all over the mouth cavity.

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The medicine for *ma:dua* is made from two fruits that can now be bought in shops. One is the unripe *apila kae* and the other nutmeg; they are ground together in equal amounts and mixed with woman's milk or cow's milk or else water. This solution is taken early in the morning, before breakfast, and again before the evening meal. If

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the disease is quite advanced a third dose is taken before the midday meal. After swallowing the medicine the patient must rest for at least a half hour before eating.

There is a treatment to prevent *ma:dua*, in the form of ginger rhizome. It must be rubbed on the teeth for up to an hour whenever the patient has time. If he does not take care of the mouth in this way, the disease can eat into the lip to cause hare-lip. It must be treated in the early stages because if left for even a week it can become very dangerous. Should it spread from the mouth to the stomach it can kill a child; as there is no effective medicine for *ma:dua* once it has reached the stomach.

The disease also spreads very quickly from the mouth to the nose, and can eat the nose away. Although recognized to be the same disease it is then called *pi:nasi*, and is treated with an extra medicine. This is put in the nostrils and onto the exterior by a specialist who may treat the patient for several weeks. I was unable to learn about its composition.

6.40. While *ma:dua* is not very contagious, there is another disease called *be:koko* which is highly contagious, and is passed to others on the eating and drinking vessels. It develops in the opposite way from *ma:dua*, starting in the stomach and spreading to the mouth. It is characterized by itching in the mouth, and is not very dangerous. Since the illness is caused by excessive "heat" in the body, everything possible is done to cool the body. Thus the patient has to be washed with *toreko:lu* bark to cool his head; he eats "cooling" foods; and swallows the *aṇila kae* and nutmeg powdered in milk.

TONSILITIS (*tonde kaṭalu*)

6.41. To cure swollen tonsils, a medicine made of leaves of thorn-apple is administered. In extreme cases the therapist removes the tonsils with two sharpened finger-nails of the left hand (cf. 5.28).

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Cisticola exilis erythrocephala), which incorporates parts of that same plant. Therapists who collect the nests only take disused ones, which they find in jungle bushes. For the medicine one large nest is pounded up and burnt in the pounding-hole (cf. 6.58). The patient sits next to this hole, his body covered with a blanket, and inhales the fumes from the burning nest. The treatment is followed for three consecutive mornings, before the patient goes to bathe or do anything else. It is only used for a slight fever which has lasted for some days or weeks.

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6.68. The treatment for a fever caused by fright involves a sweat bath. A steel knife is made red hot, put on a plate, the patient's head held over it, and then both plate and patient are covered with a blanket. Once this is done cold water is poured over the knife, and the patient remains bathing in the steam under the blanket for five minutes. After this he drinks the water from the plate (together with any dirt in it, for it has come directly from the stream).

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SINUS INFECTION (*negaḍi*)

6.69. When a person is tired much of the time, feels thirsty, has heartburn and reddish eyes, these are signs that the body is "overheated." Conversely if the nose and throat seem blocked, the head feels dizzy and the patient lacks energy, then there is "cold" in the body. Rheumatism can be caused by an excess of either heat or cold in the body. If caused by heat it is easily cured by "cooling" the body ; but if by cold it may be difficult to get the body "heated" sufficiently. A bad case of pneumonia is called by the general term *na:du no:* ("country disease"), while a mild case is *gu:de no:*; but either way it is caused by "cold," is a contagious disease transmitted by the breath, and is treated as an ordinary fever. Typhoid is treated as a more severe fever.

RHEUMATISM (*baibu*)

[757]

PNEUMONIA

TYPHOID (*na:ḍu noi*)

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The treatment for fever is partly an appropriate adjustment of the patient's diet, and partly an oint-

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757 ment to be applied externally. The latter is made from the leaf of the aloe; a large one is heated over a fire and then twisted, and a tumbler of the juice it yields is collected. This is mixed with half a tumbler of finger millet flour, a quarter tumbler of ash, and an eighth of a tumbler of salt. A bigger quantity is mixed up in these proportions if the afflicted area is unusually large. The mixture is boiled till it becomes a paste and is dabbed over the affected part of the body. This procedure is followed once daily for three consecutive days, and only on the fourth day does the patient wash the paste off. If he is still not cured the treatment may be continued for another day or two; (but see below, 7.2).

General Illnesses of the Entire Body

753 751 6.70. General weakness is seen as normal in an old person, and there is no remedy for it. On the other hand, if an old person becomes ill he is treated with the appropriate medicine.

If health (*pittam*) increases its influence over the body out of proportion to the influence held by the other two aspects of man—behaviour and mind—then the body feels faint and vomiting occurs. The 757 treatment for this imbalance is to cut a sweet lime in half, remove its seeds, and grind them together with cumin. This powder is mixed with the lime juice and swallowed by the patient early in the morning, before any other food or drink. This treatment may last from one to five days.

164 753 6.71. If an otherwise healthy man has a sudden headache and a nauseous sensation, then Badagas say a "wind" has struck him. This is the disease known as "Small Wind." Every adult can recognize its symptoms, for it is a common illness in the Nilgiris. The eyes turn red but not watery, and in a serious case vision is impaired. When a man 164 is away from home and realizes he has been struck 757

TRACHOMA OR CONJUNCTIVITIS (*kunna gaty*)

Some Common Badaga Maladies I39

all over the patient by a therapist of the same sex, and this is only done at night-time. In addition the patient must swallow at least three mouthfuls of the medicine. A bed is prepared in a hot part of the house, and the patient lies on it and is entirely covered with as many rugs and blankets as possible. After 20 to 90 minutes of this the patient, who is not even allowed to bare his head, breaks into a sweat. If the patient is not cured on the first night of this treatment (generally because he has just had sexual relations), it is continued for the next two nights or even for five consecutive nights. If he is still not cured by then the therapist knows that the illness is something other than Small Wind.

Should the patient want to go out in the morning after receiving this treatment, his face and feet are washed and water sprinkled over his body first. During the days he is being treated his diet is generally rice with onions, green leaves (*soppu*, "greens"), buttermilk, curd and some salt. Until completely cured he should have no chili.

6.72. Leprosy is called *dodda no:* ("big disease") as a euphemism for its real name, *kusta ro:ga*, which Badagas would not generally utter. It is thought of as the worst punishment that can come through illness for the heavy sins of one's ancestors. Neither the Badagas nor the Kurumba specialists have a cure for leprosy, although those patients who can afford it take opium continuously to ease the pain. People avoid taking girls in marriage from a leprous family, although leprous men are allowed to mix in public because the disease is not thought to be contagious. Dead lepers are always buried in large quantities of salt, and not cremated.

Other general illnesses are dealt with elsewhere in this volume, in Chapters 5, 7 and 8.

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kusta ro:ga)

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7 DANGEROUS AND EPIDEMIC DISEASES

"Measles does not harm one; the eye is ungrateful."
(Ironic saying)

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7. 1. There are five diseases which the Badagas see as related, and which are called "sister" diseases because they are produced by visitations of the goddess Ma:riamma. These diseases are as follows:

chicken-pox (*cikkamma*, "small Mother")
smallpox (*doḍḍamma*, "great Mother")
measles (*kasare*)
(?) rubella (*tauḍamma*)
acute conjunctivitis (*Kaṇṇu no:*, cf. 6. 37)

These diseases are distinct from each other because the goddess responsible for all of them is thought to be "playing" in different ways.

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In all five types it is possible for the therapist to distinguish which disease has occurred by certain of the symptoms. The first four diseases cause itching on various parts of the body; but if there are three spots on the palm of the hand, and/or the centre of the brow, and/or the hollow of the larynx, then the illness is smallpox or chicken-pox. The former is the most feared disease among Badagas, even more so than cholera or plague. It is characterized by the spots (*po:*) itching more and being about 1 cm apart, whereas with chicken-pox they are roughly 1/2 cm apart. In the cases of *kasare* and *tauḍamma*

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they are further apart yet. These latter two kinds of spots give little trouble, and spread over the body slowly. Once a person has been afflicted by smallpox or chicken-pox he will never get these diseases again; whereas he may suffer repeatedly from the other two.

In all four diseases (i. e., except the eye disease, 6.37) the patient is weak and feverish, and roughly the same rules are followed in treating them; with the important exception that only in the case of smallpox do people vacate their village. However when any of the other three diseases (excluding the eye disease) prevails in a village there is prohibition on anyone having sexual relations. At such times the headman and other elders spread word of the prohibition.

VARICELLA (*Cikkamma*)

7.2. Everyone gets chicken-pox at some time, generally before his tenth year. At first the parents recognize a fever in the child and so give him the regular treatment for that (6. 69). If it does not cure him by the third or the fifth day they know he has a pox. This could be caused either by the goddess "coming into the child," or by his contacting another person with the disease while they are playing, living together, carrying each other, etc. It is very safe to expose a child to chicken-pox in his third or fourth year, after weaning, but the case can become more serious if he does not get it till after the tenth year. Thus parents welcome the disease in children while they are small and not much trouble, and will purposely make a young child eat with another who has the disease; but even such encouragement sometimes fails to work. Very rarely this procedure brings tragic results, as when in one village eleven children died of chicken-pox within 20 days.

If the first signs of fever have not responded to the treatment, on the third or fifth day some spots will be found at one of the three crucial zones mentioned above (7.1). They can only be found in the morning; and until these spots are found the child is not washed. A fever may last for as long as 15 days without any spots appearing (cf. 6.67).

During the early phase of chicken-pox the child

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have been found a therapist takes cold water fresh from the spring, and adds to it three pieces of Bermuda grass and three dead-nettle flowers. This water along with its contents is sprinkled thrice over the child's head and nude body. The procedure is repeated on the fifth, seventh and ninth days after the spots were noticed, but using the same number of pieces of grass and of dead-nettle as there have been days since the apparent onset of the illness. By the ninth day the child usually feels better, but "in one case out of ten" this same procedure has to be followed for the final time on the eleventh day, using 11 flowers and 11 pieces of grass.

After the final treatment the child's body is washed for the first time since the infection was recognized. The bath-water needs to be at body temperature, but if it turns out to be too hot the parent must wait for it to cool and may not on this occasion add cold water to cool it. To this particular bath some turmeric and a nim leaf are added. When the water is ready it is poured over the child's head and body, but the parents do not rub him, wash him with soap, or even touch him. He is not dried with a towel, but made to sit in the house covered with a cloth while incense, turmeric and the dry outer skins of garlic and red onion are burnt together under the cloth. The child sits in this smoke for a minute or two, and only after doing so can he use woollen clothes again.

VARIOLA (*doḍḍamma*)

7.3. Probably no epidemic disease has been commoner or more feared among the Badagas than smallpox (Ouchterlony 1868: 65). In response to it they have developed a method of quarantine that certainly does much to restrict its spread.

The disease is caused by a visitation of the goddess Mariamma. To prevent her coming most Badaga villages celebrate an annual festival in her honour. At one well-known such festival at the temple site of Bokkapu:r chickens, goats and sheep

were sacrificed by beheading directly in front of the Ma:riamma temple. Two features of this ceremony are of interest: one is that the soil was ploughed at that point so that the blood of the victims flowed into the earth; the other is that a curtain was drawn in front of the image of Ma:riamma while the beheadings took place, lest the sight of all the blood should so arouse her thirst that she would go on the rampage through some villages, seeking the death of her human victims. A few years ago the animal sacrifices ceased. The symbolism suggests that Ma:riamma is a type of Hindu earth mother concerned as much with the fertility of the soil as with the control of disease: its control is obviously linked to the conservation of agricultural labour, from an ecological viewpoint.

If a person gets smallpox it means that he has done something impure. For this reason a therapist must pray to Ma:riamma for forgiveness of the patient's sins. The goddess is thereby pleased, not offended, if the patient recovers; yet if she is very angry she may still cause further deaths.

For a very long time the Badagas have relied on inoculations against smallpox. Probably the first person to administer these was the German missionary G.H. Weigle, who in 1846 vaccinated about 700 Badagas, "as a result of which a whole village gave him false names, for fear of magic" (Basel Mission 1846: 48-49; Eppler 1900: 79). This represented a remarkable change of attitude, for the situation up to that time was that, "...many refuse to take any remedies themselves, or to allow any to be administered to their relations, and thence arises their antipathy to vaccination. The supposition is not as to the nature or inefficiency of the means, but it is the fear of offending the goddess..."(Harkness 1832: 117, note). There is some evidence that the large-scale festivities in honour of Ma:riamma were adopted by the Badagas only towards the middle of the nineteenth century,

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a dating which raises the interesting question of whether this worship was intended to soften her anger at the effectiveness of the newly-introduced "European" vaccinations (Stokes 1882: 173).

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It is believed that one infected person can infect many others, and yet Badagas feel that if someone from *beyond* the hamlet has seen an infected person before a neighbour in his *own* hamlet does so, the latter person is that much safer from attack. It is as though some of the danger has been carried off. A person may be infected by smallpox at any age, and he then retires to bed, while the remainder of the population leave the hamlet altogether. Someone of the same sex as the patient, and who has already had the disease, stays to attend him. This person need not be a therapist, but is advised by a therapist. It is believed that anyone who has already had smallpox cannot transmit the disease from an infected person to someone else unless he does it by giving the patient's clothing to somebody. This is quite unlikely to happen since other villagers are not in contact with him at the time. When a patient dies, all the people looking after other smallpox patients in that hamlet help bury the corpse. While it is permissible for other men to dig the graves, they keep well away when infected corpses are brought for burial. It is believed (and perhaps justifiably) that if they were cremated, the smoke could spread the disease.

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Smallpox gives the patient more trouble with itching than do any of the other "sister" diseases, and so he lies on big plantain leaves since these give a cool sensation. He is given a diet of nothing but "cooling" foods, with very little salt. All of the rules and prohibitions adopted during the treatment of chicken-pox also apply to the people caring for patients with smallpox: thus the house must be kept pure, men must not smoke there, sexual relations must not occur, and no oily substances may be used in cooking. Anyone, whether

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758 inside the hamlet or not, if calling to a person still
784 in the hamlet must refrain from shouting to him. If it is essential to talk to someone in the hamlet a man turns his head away so that he cannot see that person. The idea underlying these various restrictions seems to be that fragments of diseased skin could blow into the watery crevices or oily surfaces of the healthy body and thereby spread the disease.

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757 At first smallpox is treated as a fever (6. 69), but
758 on the third day after it has been recognized as smallpox the person in attendance, under instruction from a therapist, begins the same water-sprinkling treatment described for the treatment of chicken-pox (7. 2). The water, with dead-nettle flowers and Bermuda grass in it, is sprinkled on the patient on the third, fifth, seventh and ninth days after recognition of the disease, and this continues if necessary on odd-numbered days up to the fifteenth —when 15 flowers and 15 pieces of grass are used. It is believed that no one will be afflicted with smallpox beyond the eighteenth day. As with the treatment of chicken-pox too, the patient is bathed on the last day and then made to sit under a thick cloth where he inhales smoke created by burning incense, turmeric, and the outer skins of red onions and garlic (cf. 7. 2).

164 Once a case of smallpox has been identified as
731 such, all the inhabitants of that hamlet leave and make homes for themselves in makeshift huts in their fields or perhaps some nearby jungle. But before leaving they quickly fence around their houses and workyards with thorn bushes, as a symbol of their hope that the disease might not follow them. Once in their makeshift homes they receive no visitors from elsewhere and visit no other hamlets, until the disease has disappeared entirely. At that time the hamlet's most influential men get together to decide on a day, called *u:r kuḍua jina*, when everyone will assemble and occupy their hamlet again. A

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the villages around, and this is another reason for the falling off of numbers attending our Dispensary. (Ketti Medical Mission 1938: 4-5) 164

Elsewhere we learn that, "Plague though not so virulent as it was some years ago, continues to visit certain villages...The infection is invariably traced to importation from Mysore. In 1925 it caused 21 deaths." (Madras 1928: 63)
According to the Nilgiri District gazetteer:

Plague did not reach the district until 1903, in February of which year it was imported from Mysore to Gudalur and caused twenty deaths by the end of March...The disease then spread rapidly among the planters' coolies, estate after estate reporting cases...the outbreak resulted in 191 deaths in all.
In 1904, and again in 1905-1906, the disease reappeared; but the deaths from it numbered only 29 and 49 respectively. The expenditure on preventive measures was heavy, special staffs being engaged and substantial camps being erected, and the threatened attacks at least...awakened interest in sanitary improvement in the towns and larger villages. (Francis 1908: 253-54)

"Rat-falling," as the Badagas call it, is said to be caused by an evil goddess. Plague first attacks rats and then, so Badagas believe, mosquitoes carry it from rats to men. Thus whenever they find a dead rat in the house they clean and vacate that house at once, and nowadays immediately seek injections from public health officials. It is said that people only need to vacate their homes for ten days, but Badagas in fact leave them empty for the entire period between the new moon and the full, or *vice versa*. Before injections were available for plague, Badagas put a paste on the sores it caused, and "one out of ten were cured" by this means; the rest died. The paste was the kind generally put on sores (*ga:le* cf. 6.2). 164 753 751

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164 CHOLERA (*ba:ndi be:di*)

7.6. Cholera is primarily an epidemic of the low country and is reportedly introduced to the Nilgiri Hills by inhabitants who visit the plains (Orton 1831: 406; Madras 1928: 63; Ketti Medical Mission 1943: 5). It is said to be caused by an evil god or goddess, and is one of the epidemics loosely labelled *na:du no:* ("countrywide illness").

Within two hours of a person's being attacked by cholera he will begin constant vomiting and diarrhoea. There is no accompanying fever; and it is by these two indications that the case is recognized as cholera. The body is now below its normal temperature and so must be given "heating" foods, generally arrack (2.6) and perhaps brandy; the patient is wrapped warmly and heated however possible. Others in the hamlet feel they have no chance to placate the deity who has brought cholera, or to stop her from coming. As soon as it is known that cholera has come everybody leaves the hamlet except for the one or two relatives who tend the patient. These people clean up after him, and are careful to keep their bodies heated along with his. Although people occasionally survive cholera, they most usually die in under two days. As soon as a person dies he is taken from the house and buried, whether it be day or night. No funeral takes place at this time, and no cremation is attempted.

When the villagers know there is no longer any case of cholera in the hamlet they stay away from it for at least a further fifteen days, since they must allow the passage of the full period of fourteen days that separates the new moon from the full, or *vice versa*. Once back home, and unlike their return following a smallpox epidemic, they can immediately receive visitors from elsewhere or go anywhere themselves.

164 MALARIA (*adurejara*)

7.7 Malaria is considered a kind of fever, and is believed to be caught by drinking the water at places on the lower Nilgiri slopes, below the usual levels of Badaga settlement (Hockings 1974 : 210).

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by headache, nausea, reddening of the eyes, and perhaps some part of the body not functioning normally. The first phase moves into a severer second phase after the eighth day, so that the therapist has to watch closely for symptoms that differentiate it from Small Wind. In the latter illness the fever is "all over the body," whereas in Big Wind it is everywhere except "where the Big Wind struck." If a large area has been "struck," an entire limb may be paralyzed, the other feverish parts of the body are hot and sweaty while the "struck" part is cold.

No one has died of the disease, but if a cure is not effected the patient may be partially paralyzed for the rest of his life. Fortunately it is a very rare disease: my elderly informant, Sithamma, could only remember a single instance of it in her village during the entire century. The patient was a small boy. She brought a male therapist to him from another village; for while a lady therapist could mix the medicine it it usual for a male to rub the medicine all over a male patient and for a female to treat another woman.

Very few know the cure. Of the three men I heard about, one practised over half the Nilgiri Plateau, a second was too old to practise, and a third was not successful with the treatment because of his impure life. From all but the very poor the one still practising therapist accepts presents of any kind, but does not make a formal charge for his services. The patients do also have to give him 1/4 rupee as a "tree-present" and 1 1/4 rupees as "lamp-present" (see below).

The illness is caused by a passing god (*de:va:digo*), the corner of whose cloth has touched a person. The Big Wind starts at the point where the cloth hits him, and then spreads through the body. If the point which was struck is bigger than a rupee coin, it means that the god was angry with the patient, and in that case he cannot be cured although he will still live. According to one therapist the

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from Burliya:r.

The cure for this ailment should preferably begin on the auspicious days Friday, Sunday or Tuesday. If the need is urgent it can also start on a Monday or a Wednesday; but never a Thursday or Saturday. The curing is done every night for at least three days, and it may continue till the fifth, seventh, ninth or eleventh day from the start. Usually the cure is done twice nightly; but if the case is very serious it will be done three times a night, at about 1900 hrs., midnight, and 0500 hrs. The curing can begin right after sunset, but it is generally started later, after supper. It is done at night because the house must remain closed throughout, including all windows.

When the therapist brings all the medical materials he has collected, he hides them somewhere in the bus nearby rather than bring them straight to the patient's house. These materials must not be brought near children, not because the children are impure, but because some of the plants are probably poisonous and the Indian willow is hallucinogenic.

Before he starts in the evening the women clean the house and sprinkle liquid cowdung on the floor. If there is any meat in the house it should be taken out before the cleaning begins. As the sickness is caused by a god, the people present while it is being treated must be pure. For this reason no women are allowed to stay, except those who ceased menstruation at least 12 years before. No children under 18 are allowed to stay either, "because they may be affected by some bad smell," and contract the disease. None of the men present should smoke during the night either. One of them may be allowed to go into the bathroom and urinate or smoke, but only if his need is great.

Only when all the women and children have left for the night does the therapist go and bring the hidden plants into the house. The door is then shut behind him, and must not be opened again

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It is true that different Badaga therapists may give varying diagnoses of a complaint, and the recommended treatment will vary accordingly. A patient should follow the advice of the superior and most influential among the therapists he consults. A general Badaga attitude towards "experts" is expressed in a proverb : "It is half bad if you do something you know about, entirely bad if you do it when you are ignorant." The point is that a knowledgeable person will at least know what risks he is taking : mistakes are tolerated, blunders are not, as one informant put it. An incompetent therapist or midwife may be cut down to size with another proverb : "By claiming to have qualifications he became king; by spoiling it he became a poor man."

10.15. In ancient Sanskrit texts (Charaka Samhita I, etc.) it is stated that there are three aspects to man: behaviour, mind, and health (*pittam*). Although Badaga therapists have not been able to read such texts, they do believe there are three arteries in the wrist, one controlling each of these factors. These arteries pulsate, and one can tell whether they are "good" or not. In one small village of about three hundred people where I worked there were four men who had this diagnostic skill, but none of them ever practised as a therapist. I was told that such Badagas can check the pulse, on the right wrist of a male and the left of a female, to determine which aspect of the body is upset. Its associated artery will be pulsing irregularly. Athough being a diagnostician seems to be viewed as an informal and unimportant role by Badagas, it is clear that these men actually play a crucial part in deciding whether or not a person needs some therapeutic treatment; and to this extent there is a male surveillance over the (mainly female) therapists and their work. In the village just mentioned, for instance, it is worth noting that one of the four diagnosticians was the son of the only therapist there *and* was also the traditional (though inactive) headman. The other three men commanded a certain amount of respect too because of their social positions.

10.16. Dreams are not considered to cause illness, but they are certainly diagnostic of problems to come and are treated as omens by the Badagas. So if one dreams about snakes, it means there is something impure and thus threatening in the house. If one dreams of eating honey, he will get cold and become ill. If a woman dreams of eating fruit, especially oranges, she will become pregnant before the next menses. If she dreams of losing her nose-

or ear-rings, then her husband will die. If anyone dreams of a male buffalo, there will soon be a death in the village, probably among the dreamer's relatives (since Ya:ma, the Hindu god of death, comes riding on a buffalo). If one dreams of a woman approaching in a red *sa:ri*, this means a contagious disease will soon affect his house, his relatives or his village, usually through the disease-bearing goddess. Sometimes a person dreams of a woman in a red *sa:ri* leaving the village where there is an epidemic: this means the infection will now end.

Causation of Disease

10.17. The Badagas neither recognize any particular god as responsible for creating or curing all diseases, nor consider any one single health factor to cause all illness. As we have already seen, only a few of the diseases that Badagas cure are known by them to have a specific cause. Nevertheless we will briefly review here the variety of causes that therapists can cite.

(*a*) There are five diseases that are visited upon people by a goddess : these we have treated in detail above (7.1-7.6). A similar kind of causation was recognized for "Big Wind," where a bad spirit or deity was believed to have flicked a corner of its invisible clothing against the patient's body. Infertility in a woman is ultimately the will of God, although its immediate cause may in some instances be the failure of the couple to love each other sufficiently. Aside from these instances, however, the Badagas do not consider other chronic illnesses or bodily deformities to be inflicted by the gods : they are rather viewed as the effect of unknown sins committed by the victims themselves in previous incarnations. The will of a god and the effect of one's own or one's ancestors' sins cannot altogether be separated, however. If a person gets smallpox, for example, it means that he has done something impure; and in curing him the therapist must pray to Ma:riamma, the smallpox goddess, to forgive the patient's sins. In this way the curing process pleases the goddess and she may therefore oblige by doing what is required of her.

(*b*) Mental illness is caused by a bad spirit or bad ghost getting into the body. It is believed, on the other hand, that a person can become strong and healthy if a good ghost enters him, for it will help his body to grow.

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754 (*c*) Illness can also be the work of non-Badaga shamans or
177 sorcerers, who can send a bad spirit into the victim. As with ghost
753 possession, it has to be removed by an exorcist who knows the
755 appropriate spells. It is said that in earlier days every Kurumba who had learnt sorcery was allowed to try his power sout. This would be decided by a formal council of the tribe, who would give the novices a stipulated period, usually one to four weeks, during which the young men could test their abilities. The Badagas would then be warned of what was to come, so the villagers could take every precaution and stay indoors at night. Each youth was permitted to kill one man by sorcery during this period. Deaths in the
961 Badaga community were also occasionally ascribed to the sorcery of Todas (Rivers 1906: 261, 635); and Kurumbas say there are many Badaga sorcerers too.

828 (*d*) Emotional and mental problems are otherwise said to be the
753 result of sins done by a man's ancestors, whereas bodily diseases
783 are in most cases an effect of the patient's own sins, as in the case of ulceration cited below (see *i*). Thus if the wealthy man becomes poor, or a poor man becomes rich, he attributes the change of fortune to the deeds of his ancestors. If a man lacks appetite, or does not enjoy his life or possessions, then he has a sickness resulting from the sins of his ancestors. There is no cure for it; and so if many cures are attempted and none works, it is thereby known that he has an illness caused by ancestral sin. Leprosy and mental diseases are seen as ultimately caused by that same sin. (As an explanation for the therapist's impotence this is of course very effective.)

732 (*e*) Often we find frequency of an infirmity being explained as
826 an effect of "blood." For example, in one family there are two girls and five boys. One boy and both girls are normal, but three other boys are deaf and dumb, and one is fairly deaf but can talk. As the situation was explained to me, "there must be some wrong in the parents' blood." This is perhaps still an allusion to ancestral sin.

753 (*f*) More immediate causes of some illnesses lie in one's diet or
261 bodily activities, even in uncleanliness. Among the dietary problems there is a general malady called *so:lu*, "over-heat," caused by eating insufficient milk products. Eating bad food, or eating too quickly, can also bring unfortunate results.

753 (*g*) Over-exertion may dislodge the colon or an artery and bring
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illness. Sexual over-exertion can similarly make a young man incapacitated (cf. 3.10).

(*h*) The odour that follows on an act of coitus, or the "bad wind" that emanates from a corpse, or from a childbirth, are widely held to be responsible for illness and even death in unweaned infants.

(*i*) Some misfortunes, like bites, stings and burns, are caused by quite obvious external agents. What we would consider equally obvious cases of infection, however, may be considered by Badagas to have a more complicated causation ; as in the reported case of a woman with

> an extensive ulceration from the right arm pit to the right shoulder and to the right breast. It was full of black-headed maggots .... It seems she had been in this state for one and a half months in the village ... The rest of the crowd made most unkind remarks at her expense. Some said that it was on account of her bad life in a previous birth that she had to suffer thus. Her husband's brother said that I must either cure her soon or put her to a painless end .... I sprinkled into the deep ulcerated tissue a small quantity of chloro form, and the maggots fell dead in hundreds .... There followed an uneventful recovery ... (Ketti Medical Mission 1949: 4-5)

(The writer was of course an Indian doctor trained in scientific medicine.)

(*j*) Depigmentation of the skin is caused by the supposed "bite of a blindworm."

(*k*) Nowadays a "germ theory" is not unknown, as for example in the explanation offered me for why teeth rot. Cleanliness of body is strongly approved of today.

(*l*) In the case of plague it is thought that mosquitoes carry the disease from rats to men. This modern-sounding but inaccurate theory probably arose from the publicity that surrounded the mosquito eradication programme on the lower slopes some year ago.

(*m*) And finally there is a belief that bad luck and illness tend to repeat themselves for an individual: as a proverb puts it, "The very foot which is scarred will be hurt again."

582 but are not vegetarians. In most parts of India anyone claiming to be a Brahmin
614 and practicing vegetarianism would consider it a great dishonor to take a wife from -- or worse still, to marry his daughter into -- a family of meat-eaters generally acknowledged to hold lower status in the social hierarchy. It is true that marriage between Gaudas and Haruvas is not very common; but the reason lies not in any abhorrence of the idea on the part of the Haruvas, but largely in the inconvenience such a marriage causes a meat-eating family who find themselves obliged to prepare only vegetarian dishes, and in separate vessels, whenever a Haruva affine (581) is visiting them. When a Haruva man marries a Gauda girl, it is usually because (583) he owns little or no land; in such a marriage the bride's father is likely to give the (591) Haruva land in that Gauda hamlet and encourage the couple to settle down there. Such a procedure commonly occurs when the bride's father has no son of his own; but even if he has sons they may be agreeable to the arrangement when land is available. This is the only situation in which Badagas practice uxorilocal residence.

Despite the general rule among Badagas that a woman assumes the status
262 and joins the sib of her husband's family, marriage between vegetarian Haruvas
562 and non-vegetarian Gaudas does not mean that the wife has to assume her husband's
614 dietary habits. If a Haruva girl marries a Gauda, then no meat is ever cooked in his house and the wife remains a vegetarian. If her husband wants to eat meat, he will perhaps arrange to have some cooked elsewhere and eat it outside his own home. The children of this union are fully Gaudas, however, and will normally be non-vegetarians. Once the Haruva woman has died her husband's household normal-(783) ly revert to a non-vegetarian diet. It has been reported that, "If a Badaga [i.e. Gauda] woman marries a Haruva she has to give up meat-eating and, to cleanse ●(753) her, a red hot iron is put to her tongue" (Benbow 1928: 9). "After this she would

262 562 614 (753) not dare to eat meat because of the superstitious belief that she would lose her eyesight" (Karl 1945: 3). From this we can see that a woman who marries into a Haruva family is expected to accept its dietary norms, whereas a Haruva girl marrying into a socially lower sib is not expected to accept its dietary norms (Tignous 1911: 117). If a Haruva girl marries into an Adikari or Kapakka family there will be no change in her diet; but she will be expected to wear the lingam if it is given her, and to behave as a Lingayat. When a Haruva marries a Lingayat girl he continues to wear his thread but she usually continues to wear the lingam (if one has already been given her).

574 614 [186] Haruvas are willing to accept food in the inner (more sacred) room of any other Badaga sib except the Toreyas. They would not demean themselves to enter a Toreya house; and they would probably be offered food only in the outer room of a Wodeya house. Wodeyas never accept food in a Haruva house, as they believe Haruvas to be inferior; but the other Lingayat sibs both eat in the inner room of a Haruva house. Even meat-eating Adikaris, who are not Lingayats, are offered vegetarian food in a Haruva's inner room. The same holds true for visiting Kaggusis and Gaudas; people who might often have occasion to visit a Haruva household if they are related to it by marriage. Haruvas also allow Todas, Kurumbas, Irulas and Kasubas to eat in the outer (less sacred) room of the house, but Kotas are considered too polluting to pass beyond the entrance.

614 582 (162) The vegetarian Adikaris are a Lingayat sib, numbering perhaps 3500 people, who inhabit sixteen hamlets scattered across the plateau. The sib should only intermarry with Haruvas or Kapakkas; but in the past 30 years a few have married girls from Lingayat families in Mysore. Rarely will a girl from the Nilgiris go to Mysore to marry, on the other hand. There have also been a few